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ABSTRACT

In the epicenter of the political strife in South Africa is former African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela. The ANC is considered to be the leading source of opposition to white rule in South Africa, and Mandela is one of the most revered and powerful figures to emerge from that organization. Incarcerated for over 25 years on charges of treason, Mandela remains South Africa's most well-known political figure. Many South Africans (as well as scholars from the international community) consider Mandela to be the last hope for peaceful negotiation between black insurgents and the white government: what makes Mandela's influence in South Africa so remarkable is that, due to his lifetime prison sentence, he has had virtually no contact with the black population. Mandela, however, continues to exert significant influence on the black population, largely as a rhetorical symbol. Mandela's symbolic role as leader is derived from his success as an organizational leader for the ANC; his charismatic leadership is recognized by both blacks and whites. Cognizance of the role of Mandela as a symbolic leader in the anti-apartheid movement suggests that rhetoric may play a critical function both in understanding as well as shaping the exigency in South Africa. (Thirty-nine notes are included, and 20 references are attached.) (MS)

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Silenced But Not Silent:
The Rhetorical Influence of Nelson Mandela

Susy Boyd

Abstract

This analysis focuses on the rhetorical influence of former African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela. The ANC is currently the leading source of opposition to white rule in South Africa; Mandela, who has remained imprisoned since 1962 on treason charges, is a critical figure in relations between the races. Many South Africans (as well as scholars from the international community) consider Mandela to be the last hope for peaceful negotiation between black insurgents and the white government: what makes Mandela's influence in South Africa so remarkable is that, due to his lifetime prison sentence, he has had virtually no contact with the black population.

I suggest in the following analysis that Mandela continues to exert significant influence on the black population, largely as a rhetorical symbol. Mandela's symbolic role as leader is derived from his success as an organizational leader for the ANC; his charismatic leadership is recognized by both blacks and whites.

Since his imprisonment, Mandela has become a "larger-than-life" figure, which may be attributed to sympathetic followers' perception of Mandela as a martyr symbol: Mandela has repeatedly stated that so long as the blacks are not free to live and work in South Africa, he too shall remain imprisoned. Finally, I have suggested that Mandela's symbolic leadership has been partially transferred to his wife, Winnie Mandela, as she "deputizes" for her husband during his public absence.

In conclusion, the analysis explores the role of Mandela as a symbolic leader in the anti-apartheid movement, and suggests that rhetoric may play a critical function both in understanding as well as shaping the exigency in South Africa.

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SILENCED BUT NOT SILENT:

THE RHETORICAL INFLUENCE OF NELSON MANDELA

Susy Boyd

In recent years, international attention has been called to South Africa's exigency, which is rooted in a constitution based on racial inequality. Political strife in South Africa has escalated continuously as 4.7 million whites continue to dominate and repress the black majority population of 23 million. In the epicenter of this storm is former African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela. The ANC is considered to be the leading source of opposition to white rule in South Africa, and Mandela is one of the most revered and powerful figures to emerge from that organization. Incarcerated for over twenty-five years on charges of treason, Mandela remains South Africa's most well-known political figure.

Since 1962, Mandela's influence in South Africa has been profound but silent. In this analysis I shall argue that Mandela's current role as leader of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement is primarily symbolic; furthermore, I suggest that the symbolic nature of Mandela's leadership is derived from success and personal power that was established prior to his imprisonment in 1962, and that his status was heightened even further as a result of his incarceration. Thus, the rhetorical influence of Nelson Mandela is a function of his symbolic leadership in South Africa.

Organizational theorist Max Weber parallels this understanding of leadership as a function of both the symbolic and actual, or day-to-day problems of administration: "The center [of society]...is a phenomenon of the realm of values and beliefs, which govern the society....What is the relation between the 'ordering' and 'meaning-giving' (charismatic) functions of such centers, on the one hand, and of their more organizational and administrative activities, on the other?"[1]

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The essence of Weber's question seems critical for the purpose of this analysis: if we are to understand Mandela's role as symbolic leader, and how that functions rhetorically, it seems necessary to link organizational activities and accomplishments with Mandela's symbolic role. An understanding of Mandela as a charismatic leader is a precursor to analysis of the leader as a symbol in the anti-apartheid movement. According to Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian:

> The appeal of the symbol, and the desire to discover the successful resolution of their own struggles embodied in a person of high prestige, create a potential following of persons who are most ready to supply the gaps in the leader image and to overlook contradictions. Some apparent success, recognition, or personal strength is a necessary condition for such large-scale projection to take place.... once sufficiently startling success or personal power can be demonstrated, the symbol-imputation process snowballs.[2]

In order to sufficiently analyze Mandela's role as symbolic leader, the analysis begins with an understanding of Mandela as charismatic leader, based on his history of accomplishments as head of the ANC. Following the initial section on Mandela as charismatic leader, I shall investigate how Mandela functions as symbolic leader. Finally, I shall consider the rhetorical implications of Mandela's role within the anti-apartheid movement.

Mandela as Charismatic Leader

In "The Functions of Human Communication in Organization," Weber sought to discover an answer to the question, "What is the basis of uncoerced obedience to the state?" The answer Weber posits points to three kinds of legitimate authority, one of which is charisma.[3] For the purpose of this analysis, the "state" Weber refers to would be the new South African state

Mandela is striving to establish -- that is, an apartheid-free South Africa.

The term "charisma" means, literally, "gift of grace": Weber uses the term as applied to "self-appointed, revolutionary leaders who are followed by people in distress, by people who need to follow the leader because they believe him or her to be extraordinarily gifted. The archetypes of the charismatic leader are prophets, political leaders, and military heroes."[4]

The difficulty with Weber's definition of charismatic leadership is that, while it does emphasize the importance of this phenomenon to the movement, we are still left with a vague understanding of what charisma actually is. In Modern Social Movements, William Bruce Cameron recognizes this flaw: "Even Max Weber's analysis of charisma does not indicate what is unique about the leader; 'charisma' simply means that somehow leaders attract by their personal characteristics. They all do something exceedingly well. When they stop doing it well they often cease to lead."[5]

Rudolf Heberle supports Cameron's orientation to charismatic leadership, stating: "...since a charismatic leader can maintain his authority only by constantly proving to his followers his extraordinary ability, his position is rather unstable and consequently the solidarity of the movement is at all times precarious."[6] From these theories, the best understanding of charismatic leadership that we can achieve is that it is a phenomenon in which followers are drawn to a leader for his or her personal characteristics, and that the leader is perceived by the people to possess extraordinary talents or gifts. This is an acceptable definition, so long as we are able to understand what the talents or gifts of the leader actually are: to the extent that these graces remain vague and unexplained, the definition will be of little use. Thus, the following section shall seek to discover the nature of Nelson Mandela's extraordinary talents as a political leader.

In discussing the personal attributes of Nelson Mandela that may account for his

charismatic leadership, we need to understand those special skills and talents that the imprisoned leader possesses. One of the most outstanding contributions that Mandela has made to the liberation movement is his influence in modernizing the strategies and tactics of the ANC. Prior to Mandela's involvement, the ANC operated from a non-violent ideology – members and leaders emphasized petitions and conferences as the means toward a free South Africa. The result of this approach to change was inconsequential; blacks in South Africa continued to remain as oppressed as they had in 1912 when the organization was initiated.

In 1944 Mandela joined the African National Congress and founded the ANC Youth League; much of his reputation as a great leader stems from his involvement with this branch of the ANC. An anonymous writer for Sechaba states: "He contributed tremendously in modernising the ANC of those days, bringing about the organisational reforms, articulating a revolutionary philosophy and working out the revolutionary strategy and tactics of our movement. There is not a single campaign or revolutionary activity of our masses in which Nelson Mandela did not participate. He was arrested, house-arrested, imprisoned and banned. But he did not lose his vision."[7] One of the most significant shifts in ANC activity during Mandela's leadership was the introduction of violence into ANC strategies. Thus, Mandela played a key role in developing a pro-violent orientation towards the liberation struggle. This is not to suggest that Mandela is, in fact, a violent man (an accusation he has refuted repeatedly). He had come to the realization that violent strategies, such as guerrilla tactics and sabotage, were the only means of change; this sentiment was expressed in leaflets that were distributed following explosions in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and Durban:

> We of Unkhonto have always sought – as the liberation movement has sought – to achieve liberation without bloodshed and civil clash....The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time

has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom. The government has interpreted the peacefulness of the movement as a weakness; the people's non-violent policies have been taken as a green light for government violence...We are striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people of this country.[8]

As influential as Mandela was in developing the ANC's new revolutionary tactics, he was by no means alone in this endeavor. Mandela possessed other characteristics that gained him popular notoriety. One of his most noted roles is that of the "Black Pimpernel": Mandela was a mastermind in underground work. Following the Treason Trial in 1961, Mandela went underground in order to continue working with the ANC without being detected by the police. Following the banning of the ANC in 1961, it became imperative to continue operating in secrecy. Hence, from his underground operations, Mandela was able to continue his leadership functions until his arrest in 1963.

Mandela's political savvy cannot be overestimated as a potent component of his personal character. His greatest strength is the ability to appeal to a wide base of support as a representative of the oppressed masses. An anonymous author writes: "He has contributed almost by unique manner in uniting our people: workers, peasants, women and the young into the mainstream of the revolution. He cemented the ties between the African, Indian, and Coloured people....he helped to strengthen the unity between non-communists and communists, and by doing so laid a foundation for a broad democratic front for all...".[9]

It is important, in understanding Mandela's political insights, to recognize his outlook toward apartheid and racism. Different leaders hold varying perspectives towards change in South Africa; some of the more youthful, radical members of the ANC have become

disillusioned to the point where they see no room for the white people in a free South Africa. In their article, "The Year of the Amabuthu," Tom Lodge and Mark Swilling note: "How the youth will respond if the fighting ever stops and the talking ever begins may not be such a simple question to answer. South Africa's black teenagers have the least to gain from any concessions to white security and privilege."[10]

Mandela, however, seeks an end to racialism on the part of both blacks and whites: "Nelson Mandela's outlooks are distinguished by a combination of implacable anti-racialism and revolutionary nationalism. This combination is logical since Mandela's anti-racialism is the negation of racialism altogether."[11] Hence, much of Mandela's broad-based political appeal may stem from his outlook that racialism is a universal evil, whether practiced by black or white. Such an outlook allows for inclusion of other oppressed minorities in South Africa (such as Indians and Coloureds), thus widening the base of support. Furthermore, Mandela's approval of militaristic tactics appeals to the youth of the movement, who have become increasingly restless towards the thus-far slow progress of liberation.

The charismatic nature of Mandela's leadership can be summed up in the following manner: first, he was highly influential in developing a more radical, militaristic orientation towards change. In addition to this ideological shift, he was responsible for strategically operating the ANC as an underground operation following its banning. The leader has widespread appeal in that his beliefs reflect the desires of most oppressed people in South Africa, not only the black population. Mandela is a highly intelligent, articulate man who is popular not only for his actions and beliefs, but for what he has come to represent to the African people.

In many ways, Nelson Mandela represents a "larger-than-life" incarnation of freedom to the oppressed South Africans. Though imprisoned for more than twenty years, he remains one

of the most popular candidates as a leader for a free South Africa.[12] Indeed, it is important to note that many South Africans perceive Mandela not only as a charismatic leader, but as a symbol for the liberation movement – a Sechaba journalist notes: "...after twenty years behind bars Mandela remains the most vital symbol of our people's struggle for freedom and human dignity.[13]

Characteristics of the Symbolic Leader

This section begins with a brief discussion of the symbolic nature of man. Kenneth Burke characterizes man as the "symbol-using animal," and pointedly asks the question, "...can we bring ourselves to realize just...how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by 'reality' has been built up for us through nothing but our symbol systems?.....however important to us is the tiny sliver of reality each of us has experienced firsthand, the whole overall 'picture' is but a construct of our symbol system."[14] In essence, Burke is arguing that our symbols construct what we perceive as "reality."

Furthermore, Burke indicates that these symbols may be extended to include more than verbal cues: "In being a link between us and the nonverbal, words are by the same token a screen separating us from the nonverbal – though the statement gets tangled in its own traces, since so much of the 'we' that is separated from the nonverbal by the verbal would not ever exist were it not for the verbal (or for our symbolicity in general, since the same applies to the symbol systems of dance, music, painting, and the like)."[15] We can argue, from the standpoint of Burke's analysis, that symbols enable man to go beyond actual events to form a new reality, and to be understood by followers in a movement as "larger than life." In this analysis, the symbolicity includes not only verbal cues, but an individual as symbolic to the black people of South Africa. In this sense, the influence of Nelson Mandela extends beyond his actual deeds,

capabilities, and character, into a larger realm of influence as a symbolic figure.

One more issue concerning the symbolic nature of man will be discussed that is relevant to this analysis. Burke points out that "A fundamental resource 'natural' to symbolism is substitution."[16] That is, since symbols function as a "screen" between verbal and nonverbal, the fact that they are representing the nonverbal makes them a substitution for the nonverbal. Citing Horne Tooke, Burke further argues that "a typical resource of language is abbreviation. And obviously, abbreviation is also a kind of substitution, hence a kind of 'displacement,' while it is also necessarily a kind of 'condensation.'"[17]

Language (or, in this case, symbolism) functions as an abbreviation for a larger message. Just as the verbal symbol "democracy" evokes not only the definition of that word, but connotative meaning as well, so does the name Nelson Mandela stand for oppression, freedom and hope for many South Africans. Symbolically, Nelson Mandela is a figurehead, an abbreviation for the aims and goals of the liberation movement. As Turner and Killian suggest in Collective Behavior, "The symbol that a leader represents is partly a creation of the promoters of the movement, and largely a projection by the followers. The appeal of the symbol, and the desire to discover the successful resolution of their own struggles embodied in a person of high prestige, create a potential following of persons who are most ready to supply the gaps in the leader image and to overlook contradictions."[18]

Mandela as Symbolic Leader

One of the key indications that Mandela's influence in South Africa is significantly symbolic is the fact that he has been imprisoned continuously since 1962, and has extremely limited contact with any outside sources. In an article from Sechaba, an anonymous author writes: "For all his charisma and all his leadership qualities, who now remembers him clearly

after all the years? For all his speeches and his writings, who now is able to read them after all the years of censorship and repression?"[19] In effect, we would not expect a leader who has had such little opportunity to operate to continue to uphold such a stronghold in the political arena of the Africans. We may conclude that in addition to the power base Mandela built prior to his imprisonment, he has continuing support from his followers based on symbolic influence.

One way of accounting for Mandela's continuing influence during his absence is by examining the effects of symbolic leadership. As Orrin E. Klapp indicates:

> Symbolic leadership works on masses and audiences prior to, without, and in spite of organization....A symbolic leader moves people through his image, the kind of man he seems to be, the style of life or attitude he symbolizes. People respond to him in the mass and in audiences, so he does not need bureaucratic or other status to be effective. He can combine organizational with symbolic leadership (as did Ghandi), but a symbolic leader is likely to have functions far beyond those of particular organizations and structures.[20]

Symbolic leadership is possible in the absence of Mandela because, as Klapp notes, organizational leadership is not necessary in order for symbolic leadership to be effective. I have argued that Mandela's current leadership stems from his expert organizational skills, but symbolic leadership theory explains why Mandela remains a key figure in the anti-apartheid movement in spite of his long absence. What remains to be analyzed is <u>how</u> the symbolic leadership process operates.

Turner and Killian point out that there are mechanisms in the process of acceptance that promote continuity of the leader's popularity. One such mechanism is the "self-protecting character of the symbolizing process itself, which makes for selective perception and a special valuation on the actions of the symbolized person. The followers do not see the faults of the

leader, they refuse to believe them and attribute the accounts to the malice of others."[21] Thus, the very nature of the acceptance of the symbolic leader allows for perpetuation of that image. In addition to the leader functioning as a "general-symbol," Turner and Killian indicate that there are a number of specialized symbols that may induce a following.

One of the more prominent specialized-symbol leader types is that of the martyr. Turner and Killian state:

> The function of the martyr symbol appears to be chiefly to strengthen the determination of those who are already adherents and to marshall active support from those who are giving passive support or are ambivalent about the movement. This function of winning those on the borderline and reinforcing those within the movement is accomplished by two effects of the martyr symbol. First, the image of the martyr arouses indignation against the opponents of the movement. The suspicion that the movement concerns a disagreement among reasonable men is dissipated if it can be shown that the opponents will stop at nothing to resist the movement....Second, the image of the martyr symbolizes true and unwavering devotion to the cause, and thereby evokes guilt and shame in the half-hearted adherents.[22]

It appears that Mandela has been effective in portraying himself as martyr symbol, both by his own accounts and those of others. Fikile Bam, lawyer and member of the Unity Movement, was quoted as saying: "Once you put a man in jail 'for life', there's nothing else you can do to him – except kill him, of course. He becomes a power in his own self. The longer Mandela is kept in prison, the more of a focus he becomes for the things we all hope for."[23] Indeed, one of the primary functions of Mandela as a martyr symbol is to represent those things the Africans hope for.

The question that needs to be addressed at this point of the analysis is, "What is it that Mandela as martyr symbol represents?" The answer is to be found in numerous statements that Mandela himself has made: so long as the black leader remains imprisoned, so do the black Africans, Coloureds, and Indians live without freedom. Mandela is more than a black leader in jail – he has come to represent, or symbolize, the plight of the blacks in South Africa: this is the essence of Mandela's "specialized-symbol" role as martyr.

Both Winnie and Nelson Mandela have emphasized their plights as symbolic of the generalized state of oppression in South Africa. When Mandela was offered release from his imprisonment in 1985, the black leader declined the offer, arguing that the "freedom" being offered was questionable: "I cherish my own freedom dearly but I care even more for your African freedom. I am in prison as the representative of the people and of your organization, the African National Congress, which was banned. What freedom am I being offered when I must ask for permission to live in an urban area? What freedom am I being offered when I need a stamp in my pass to seek work?....Your freedom and mine cannot be separated."[24]

Winnie Mandela reiterated these sentiments, stating in her autobiography Part of My Soul: "I have ceased a long time ago to exist as an individual. The ideals, the political goals that I stand for, those are the ideals and goals of the people in this country. They cannot just forget their own ideals....Whatever they do to me, they do to the people in this country. I am and will always be only a political barometer."[25]

Due to the obvious limitations placed upon Mandela during his imprisonment, his actual deeds and accomplishments have been limited during the past twenty-five years: hence the importance of Mandela's symbolic influence is significant. In the physical absence of Mandela, the Africans have sought to displace their admiration to another key figure in the liberation movement. The following section of this analysis considers the transference of symbolic

leadership from Nelson Mandela to his wife, Winnie.

Given the fact of Mandela's long-standing imprisonment, it is remarkable that the jailed leader has continued to maintain significant influence upon African politics. The credibility that Mandela continues to uphold may very likely be due to the efforts of his wife, who has become "his surrogate and a symbol of the fight against South Africa's racial repression....Her public appearances regularly set off huge dancing demonstrations, and at the funerals of blacks killed in racial unrest, she is often carried on the shoulders of singing youths. Winnie claims she only 'deputizes' for her husband."[26] Considering the influential role that Winnie has developed as a result of her husband's imprisonment, the following section of this analysis examines what apppears to be the transference of symbolic leadership from Nelson to Winnie Mandela as she continues the liberation struggle in her husband's absence.

Transference of Symbolic Leadership to Winnie Mandela

In On Charisma and Institution Building, Max Weber presents an outline of various modes of succession for the charismatic leader: "The way in which this problem [succession] is met, if it is met at all and the charismatic group continues to exist, is of crucial importance for the character of the subsequent social relationships."[27] Two of the possible solutions for succession that Weber suggests are applicable to the Mandela's situation: succession by designation and participation by kinsmen.

The nature of both forms of succession is that the charisma of the original leader remains with that person, while simultaneously, charisma is imparted to the succeeder. Succession by designation occurs when the original charismatic leader designates his own successor and his recognition on the part of the followers.[28] The other type of succession, participation by kinsmen, is usually based on the conception that charisma is a quality transmitted by heredity;

"thus that it is participated in by the kinsmen of its bearer, particularly by his closest relatives."[29] Generally this type of succession of charismatic leadership entails genetic linkage, as between father and son, or brother and brother. However, for the purposes of this analysis the definition has been interpreted to include a close relative, though not blood-linked.

Through Winnie Mandela's own reference to herself as "deputizer" for her husband, we may infer that Mandela has designated his wife to carry on where he is not able. This is not to say that Winnie functions as official leader of the ANC as her husband had -- that position is occupied by Mandela's closest personal friend, Oliver Tambo. However, symbolically Winnie Mandela embodies those principles of freedom and nonracialism that her husband does, as she remains visible to the oppressed South Africans.

What separates Winnie Mandela from other black female political advocates is not necessarily her predicament -- that is, her credibility is strengthened when one learns of the imprisonment, bannings, loss of loved ones, and separation from her husband that she has endured. However, as Winnie Mandela is the first to admit, she is not unique in this respect. Her symbolic leadership is heightened by the visibility that she carries -- Bishop Manas Buthelezi writes: "Her name and stature have forced even some of the most apathetic to realize what is behind the reality of bannings, detentions and political imprisonments. Her imposing stature has served to make visible the statureless nobodies who are victims of these political evils somewhere....Through the story of her own life we are able to read the story of many others....She was and is the incarnation of the black people's spirit."[30] In this respect, Winnie Mandela has come to symbolically represent the plight of black anti-apartheid activists, acting as successor to her husband's role.

The importance of Winnie Mandela's presence as she continues to carry on the symbolic

leadership role in South Africa is of critical importance in the liberation struggle. Weber writes, "In genuinely charismatic movements there arises the problem of transforming the charismatic authority of the original leader into a more stable form, a problem of special urgency after the death of the original charisma bearer."[31] Though Mandela is alive, his presence in South Africa has been missed since his imprisonment in 1962. According to Weber, if charismatic authority is not succeeded, it is lost. Hence, it is critical that a leader who represents the exigency in South Africa remains available to the public if the charismatic authority is to stabilize into a viable source of power: it is suggested that Winnie Mandela fulfills this valuable role.

Thus far I have focused on the symbolic leadership of Nelson and Winnie Mandela in the anti-apartheid movement. First, I argued that Nelson Mandela's far-reaching influence as leader of the anti-apartheid movement is attributable to his charismatic leadership. The nature of this leadership was found to lie in his political know-how, his militaristic ideology, and the ability to appeal to a wide range of supporters based on the widely-accepted belief in non-racialism. Second, I suggested that Mandela's role as symbolic leader stems from his charismatic leadership abilities, and that his role as such has been equally important as those duties which he has actually carried out. Mandela symbolically is what Burke calls an "abbreviation," a leader who represents the oppression faced by non-whites in South Africa. Finally, I suggested that the symbolic leadership that Nelson Mandela possesses has been transferred to his wife, Winnie Mandela, and that role has been critical in stabilizing Nelson Mandela's authority in South Africa.

Symbolic Leader as Rhetorical

I have attempted to establish Mandela as primarily a symbolic leader within South

Africa's anti-apartheid movement in order to form the groundwork for the remainder of this analysis, which considers how Mandela, as symbolic leader, functions rhetorically within the movement.

Hugh Duncan, in Symbols and Social Theory, states: "What communicative forms do in our social relations must be explained by how they do it."[32] This section addresses that challenge by emphasizing the rhetorical nature of Mandela's role as symbolic leader. Specifically, I shall argue that, first, Mandela's role is indeed a rhetorical one within the movement; and second, it is suggested that the rhetorical means by which Mandela as symbolic leader functions is via transcendence.

The first question to be pursued is whether or not analysis of Mandela as symbolic leader is within the realm of rhetoric: much of the literature on symbolic leaders and social movements is approached from a sociological perspective. However, rhetorical analysis of the topic is relevant in that (as Simons, et. al. suggest) the symbol of Mandela can be considered persuasive: "Ideologies are expressed in the personas of symbolic leaders...."[33] Thus, the ideologies represented by Mandela may be examined as a rhetorical subject.

More to the point, the symbolic figurehead that Mandela has become known for may in itself qualify as a rhetorical subject for analysis. Barry Brummett considers the function of a rhetorical "symbolic form" as "...an invitation to experience part of life in a particular way....When a great many people behave in a pattern that follows a symbolic form and when other people, seeing this form being danced in public, join and accept participation in that form, then the form ordering mass behavior has rhetorical characteristics."[34]

Having set forth the argument that Mandela (and his wife, Winnie) occupy prominent positions within the liberation movement, and as symbolic leaders for the ANC's cause, it follows that analysis of the Mandelas as symbolic leaders is within the realm of the

rhetorical discipline.

From this premise, we need to understand how Mandela functions rhetorically within the movement. Previously I argued that Mandela's charismatic leadership was instrumental in elevating his status to that of symbolic leader: the following section follows that contention. Using the Burkean concept of "transcendence," this analysis shall attempt to explicate the means by which Mandela's role as symbolic leader is rhetorical.

The first question to be addressed here is how Mandela as charismatic leader can be considered rhetorical. As I have argued previously, it was Mandela's charismatic leadership that paved the way towards his role as symbolic leader; this explanation calls for a rhetorical interpretation. In "Essential Attributes of the Concept of Charisma," George P. Boss suggests that "charisma can represent a substantial concept...for rhetorical theory and criticism."[35] Quoting John T. Marcus, Boss writes: "'Empathic identification with the charismatic figure becomes the vehicle of transcendence; through it the individual...finds a new identity in his relationship to the...Hero embodied.'"[36] Boss' ideas are relevant to this analysis in that Mandela's charismatic leadership has been a source of identification for the blacks of South Africa. Yet Mandela's role goes beyond that of charismatic leader.

I have argued that supporters of Mandela have come to identify with the leader as a result of his charismatic leadership: this point is rather obvious, however. The critical issue regarding Mandela is that his status has superseded that of charismatic leader. Of salient interest is how Mandela's role as symbolic leader functions rhetorically. Previously I had suggested that symbols can manifest themselves as a "substitution" for ideas. Burke discusses the implication of "substitution" in Language as Symbolic Action: "Substitution sets the condition for 'transcendence,' since there is a technical sense in which the name for a thing can be said to 'transcend' the thing named (by making for a kind of 'ascent' from the realm of motion

and matter to the realm of essence and spirit)."[37]

"Transcendence" is a significant concept as it relates to Mandela as symbolic leader. This is the term that allows us to understand how Mandela ascends from real-life hero as former ANC leader to the symbolic leader that he is presently, and to do so in the context of a rhetorical rather than a sociological perspective. In order for Mandela to function as a symbolic leader to the black masses, it is necessary that he transcend the varied and split camps that have developed within the liberation struggle. The fact that Mandela remains the number one candidate as leader of a free South African state supports the contention that he has, more than any other black public figure, accomplished that feat.

The relationship between symbolic leadership and transcendence is outlined by Charles J. Stewart, Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton, Jr.: "Leaders, in their struggle for power and attempts to stay in power, must provide integrative symbols for the masses to transcent the ambiguities and conflicts of heroes and villains....when division in society is so great that symbols no longer possess common meanings, people will turn to leaders who will create new symbols. When symbols can no longer transcend differences among people, conflict can only be resolved through violence."[38]

Thus, Mandela's presence as symbolic leader serves the critical function of preserving a sense of unity among the black South Africans: furthermore, because Mandela's role is largely symbolic, and able to "transcend" differences, a rhetorical rather than sociological analysis is most beneficial to understand the importance of Mandela to South Africa's liberation struggle.

In conclusion, an understanding of the symbolic leadership of a movement is an obligatory component of analysis; in a prominent movement such as this, we would expect the perception of a popular leader to carry substantial weight for the progress of that movement's goals. Stewart, Smith, and Denton support this idea:

> Charismatic agitators...replace moderate men of words or prophets. They control the movement and must be able to stage symbolic acts and to confront institutions.... Leaders and members may experience martyrdom for the cause by suffering injury, imprisonment, banishment, or death...the 'cause' has become the true believer's reason for being. The persuasive goal is to raise the consciousness level of the people so that the majority will adopt and pressure the establishment to adopt the movement's...solutions. The people must come to see themselves as the oppressed who have both the right and the power on their side.[39]

Thus, Mandela's role as symbolic leader of the blacks is significant as a persuasive tool for unifying and gathering support among his followers. It is hoped that this analysis has increased our understanding of the central role symbols play in producing social change: while many sociological, economic, and political analyses on the the crisis in South Africa have been produced, further insight may be gained from considering that country's exigency from a rhetorical perspective. Indeed, persuasive efforts offer hope that South Africa's clash between blacks and whites may be settled with symbols rather than blood.

Endnotes

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6. Rudolf Heberle, Social Movements (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951), 132.
7. "Nelson Mandela: 60 Years Old," Sechaba 3 (1978): 1.
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